

**NEW ENGLAND LABORERS' and CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
CONSTRUCTION and CAREER ACADEMY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**4 Sharpe Drive, Cranston, RI**

**November 19, 2013**

**12:00 P.M. Public Session**

**Educational Seminar following Public Session**

**MINUTES**

**This meeting of the New England Laborers' and Cranston Public Schools Construction and Career Academy was held on the above date in the conference room and called to order at 12:15 p.m. with the following members present: Chairman Traficante, Dr. Lundsten, Mrs. McFarland, Dr. Leone and Mr. Jacobs. Absent were: Mr. Sabitoni, Mr. Santangelo, Mr. Rampone and Mr. Cardi.**

**This meeting was called to order; the roll was called. It was noted there was a quorum present. There was no executive session.**

**Minutes of Previous Meeting(s) Approved – October 15, 2013**

**Moved by Dr. Lundsten; seconded by Dr. Leone. All were in favor.**

**Public Acknowledgements/Communications – none.**

**Chairperson's Communications – none.**

## **Executive Director's Communications**

**Mr. Curran stated – we have a few topics to cover in this section of the agenda today. (Reports were passed out).**

### **a. Admissions (see report a. on file in the superintendent's office)**

**Mr. Curran stated – Mr. Pecorelli has summarized some of the events since the last board meeting. A couple of highlights – the Fiscal Management/Development (Recruitment) committee did meet on October 29th and we discussed some of the strategies for recruiting as well as discussed some of the responses that would be made to the visiting team in February. Another meeting has been scheduled for either December or January. Also, we scheduled three visits to the middle schools for December and this year our strategy is to meet with the entire 8th grade population whereas in the past that hasn't always been the case. Now Mr. Pecorelli and I are going to go together and will be bringing a couple of students with us as well, 12th graders, to talk to the 8th grade students about why they chose to come to this school, the success they have had here and what they plan to do when they graduate in June. This is earlier than we have visited schools in the past and our strategy is to really get to the 8th graders, and their parents, before they really start to make their decision about whether they are going to East or West next year. Following those visits in December we will be mailing to the 8th grade parents some literature about our school and telling them of the January date when we are going to have an open house for all parents, not just Cranston parents but all parents that would be interested in our school. That date is Wednesday, January 15, 2014 at**

6 p.m. Also in December Mr. Pecorelli has scheduled a meeting for all admissions directors from all the charter schools in the League. There are now 19 charter schools in Rhode Island and we are inviting those admissions directors to come here for a meeting so we can talk about strategies for enrollment. What we have found of late is that all charter schools are starting to experience some difficulties in fulfilling their enrollment numbers. That has been a problem for us for a few years and now we are seeing that spreading to other schools as well. Part of that might be that there are more charter schools now and part of it might be we just need to do a better job as a league of charter schools to get the word out about our schools. That will be a December 3rd meeting here that we are hosting.

b. Adult, Vocational and Credit Recovery (see report b. on file in the superintendent's office)

Mr. Curran stated – this is Gayle's report and you can see some of the numbers in here, GED is doing well with approximately 55 students enrolled and the goal for the year would be 140. GED testing has started. The new GED testing will start in January and you may recall from previous meetings – this is a new system that we had to do over a computer lab downstairs and it is all done on the computer now starting in January. This is very regulated and we are close to being ready.

Discussion ensued regarding the procedure for test taking.

VTA programs have begun; January 14th is the new starting date for the Certified Nursing Assistant program.

c. Financial Development (see report c. and c-1 on file in the

**superintendent's office)**

**Mr. Curran stated – Carol reviewed the lease agreement and discovered there was a miscalculation in rent going back to 2007. We communicated with the attorney and a credit of \$5,840 was recounted.**

**Mrs. Corcelli reviewed the operating budget with the board and stated the budget was tracking well.**

**Mr. Curran stated – about two weeks ago we had a visit by Congressman Langevin. He visited with our construction program, spending about 45 minutes with us. Dr. Lundsten and Mr. Traficante were here as well. Congressman Langevin had some nice discourse with our students in the construction program, asked them a lot of questions, they spoke very eloquently I would say about that program and why they are here and what they have gotten out of this school. I think it was enriching for him as it was for us. He told us a lot about his work in Washington, working towards career development and in particular his interest in the Rhode Island labor market and how this school represents a nice opportunity to expand skills in the students so that when they go on to work in the construction program or any program that they have the skills necessary at the entry level. His webpage has subsequently a nice article with some photographs and a very complimentary report about our school which Carolyn has duplicated and will be available in the future for our work with RIDE.**

**Mr. Curran continued – last Wednesday, thanks to the**

recommendation of Dr. Lundsten, we hosted a Board of Education meeting here and we had set up a nice facility for them in the cafeteria for their meeting. We worked on some technology and I think we did a nice job getting the facility arranged for them. They were very appreciative and of course this was a good opportunity for me to speak to them about our school and let them know we are up for recharter this year and they will be reviewing us in late May or early June and Carolyn had put together a nice packet of information for them at their seats so they had some take-aways as well. The packet included some literature, some of our gains, and our new video that was produced by the Laborers. It gave them a good connection to our school. Also, one of our parents came to the meeting, signed up to speak (we did not know this parent was even coming to the meeting) and was very complimentary about why he chose this school for his daughter. I didn't know this but he is on the school committee in Cumberland and he drives 160 miles a day, brings her here, continues on to his job in Boston, then drives back, picks her up and drives her back home again. He states it certainly is worth the drive for him for her to come here. I think that speaks volumes that he is on a school committee and he chose this charter school for her to come to. I think the Board of Ed left with a good opinion of our school in that short time we had them in the building.

Mr. Curran finished up by saying – we have had some meetings with RIDE as we typically do and we had our quarterly report out with Sarah who is in the Office of Transformation and that was to prepare

for our meeting on Thursday with Andrea. We also met, that same week, with Nora Mia, who is in the Office of Transformation and she is on the charter renewal side so we were meeting with Sarah and on the focal side and then we met with Nora on the school side and that of course was a different agenda but that was a good two and a half hour meeting here. Mike Traficante was here for the meeting of course as well as Chris and Jay Sabitoni. We got some good information which Carolyn will be taking about to get ready for the visit and we felt it was a very positive exchange we had with Nora on that day as well.

Carolyn Ferris stated – I am going to start with the focus side and give you a quick update (see handout #2 on file in the superintendent's office). What I am passing out is called the Data Pool from RIDE. RIDE does a data pool every quarter and this gives us the data points that they are looking at and we have progress and to show improvement. The top part, a lot of it doesn't change because it is annual; a lot has to do with NECAP. I want to draw your attention to the bottom because we are very clean with the direction we are going in all of our indicators. Down the bottom of the page, there are four markers they look at quarterly, Teacher Absenteeism, Student Attendance Rate, Chronic Absenteeism, and Suspension Rate. Teacher Absenteeism Rate – we had a target of in August of 10%, right now in November we are at 3.27% which is probably the best teacher attendance we have had which is a huge indicator as to where the school climate is in this building. Student Attendance Rate

– we have gone over the last two years from 80.4% to right now we're at 89.1%. I want to draw your attention to the Chronic Absenteeism – in August when we met with them they had us recorded at 70.7% which I knew was high and I knew there was something was amiss. That is not where we were on our side of the data that we were looking at which was closer to 50% which is still high so they gave us until November to fix this in digging we found two errors with the recording system. ASPEN was one – there was something written into one of the programs which was the high school attendance which was array. It was adding absents and tardies to students randomly. ASPEN rewrote the program to correct that. On the other side was operator error with recording. We got it cleaned up, they did another pool and we are at 37.1%. That is the lowest we have ever been and that is good. The change in data has been put into RIDE and we are just waiting for them to make the change.

Mr. Curran stated – to that point, when we had met with Andrea, going back a couple of meetings, she talked about the chronic absenteeism rightly so because we were showing 70% for last year. Chronic absenteeism is if the student is absent 10% of the time so in a 180 day year that would be 18 absences minimum. She blatantly said you have the worst chronic absenteeism in the state. We knew we didn't. But when we came back and started to do our digging that's when we discovered the error in the programming in ASPEN and then the operator error piece, now that has been fixed we asked, as Carolyn just said, we asked RIDE to go back and rerun last years' numbers. Dr. Lundsten sent a letter requesting that and they are in the process

of doing that. We don't know what that number will be, it won't be 70, my guess is it's going to be around 50%. That would put us in the lower tier of schools with chronic absenteeism but we won't be the lowest.

Carolyn Ferris stated – there are 12 high schools at 40% or above. Suspension Rate – they changed their formula so it is a little hard to follow but in the August read-out we were at .99, we are at 1.59 in the year before and then .82 the year before that. Right now we are at .11 for the year and that is going to track at .61. So we are projected to cut it by about 30% which is another great number that we are looking at. Now, as we move forward obviously we are going to be in focus for another year, these numbers moving forward are extremely important for the focus but also as it goes through the recharter process – the chronic absenteeism rate is one of the markers that they are going to be using.

Dr. Leone asked about the dropout rate. Carolyn stated – those numbers are from 2012 and included the AEP students. Those numbers are not as clean as they could be. We won't have the 2013 numbers until January. We will probably see numbers from the AEP for about two more years.

Discussion ensued regarding this school going through focus and recharter at the same time and RIDE.

A motion to accept the Executive Director's report was made by Dr. Leone and seconded by Dr. Lundsten. All were in favor.

**Board Members Communications- none**



## **Public Hearing**

- a. Students (agenda/non-agenda matters) - no speakers.**
- b. Members of the Public (agenda matters only) – no speakers.**

## **Action Calendar/Action Agenda**

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### **RESOLUTION(S)**

**NO. 11-1-13 – Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Executive Director, the School Improvement Plan be accepted.**

**Moved by Dr. Leone; seconded by Dr. Lundsten. All were in favor.**

**School Improvement Plan and District Strategic Plan (see handouts #3 and #4 on file in the superintendent's office).**

**NO. 11-2-13 – Resolved, that at the recommendation of the Chairperson of the New England Laborers' and Cranston Public Schools Construction and Career Academy Board of Directors, the Amended Schedule of Meetings for the 2014 year be adopted (see attached).**

**Moved by Mr. Jacobs; seconded by Dr. Lundsten. All were in favor.**

**Public Hearings on Non-Agenda Items – no speakers.**

**Announcement of Future Meeting – January 14, 2014.**

**Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Lundsten; seconded by Dr. Leone. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Michael A. Traficante**

**Chairperson**

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**EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR**

**AGENDA**

**TOPIC(S):**

**1. Discussion on the Recharter of the NEL and CPS Construction and Career Academy.**

**Board members who are unable to attend this meeting are asked to notify the Chairperson in advance.**

**Interested persons and the public at large, upon advance notice, will be given a fair opportunity to be heard at said meeting on the items proposed on the agenda.**

**Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must notify the main office of Cranston Public Schools at 270-8170 seventy-two hours in advance of the meeting date.**

**Any changes to the agenda pursuant to RIGL 42-46-6 (e) will be posted on the school district's website at [www.cpsed.net](http://www.cpsed.net), Cranston Public Schools' administration building, 845 Park Avenue, Cranston, RI; and NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy, 4 Sharpe Drive, Cranston, RI and will be electronically filed with the Secretary of State at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.**

**Notice posted: 11/12/13**

**Secretary of State Website; Cranston Public Schools, 845 Park Avenue, Cranston, RI; NEL and CPS Construction and Career Academy, 4 Sharpe Drive, Cranston, RI**

## **AMENDED**

### **NEL/CPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS for 2014 (3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH\*) 12 noon – 4 Sharpe Drive**

**January 21, 2014 – January 14, 2014 at 2 p.m. (\*exception)**

**February 25, 2014**

**March 18, 2014**

**April 15, 2014**

**May 20, 2014**

**June 17, 2014**

**July 15, 2014 (if necessary)**

**August 19, 2014**

**September 16, 2014**

**October 21, 2014**

**November 18, 2014**

**No Meeting in December (Gathering in Pomfret, CT.)**

**Date to be determined**

**Resolution No. 11-2-13**

**November 19, 2013**